

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2822
By: Eissler
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There is a critical shortage of speech language pathologists in Texas and school districts are experiencing great difficulty in hiring licensed speech language pathologists. Many school districts throughout the state cannot provide the necessary services for the increasing numbers of students in need. School districts have offered stipends, other monetary incentives and have participated in extensive recruitment efforts to find qualified providers. Some districts spend in excess of \$100,000 per year to contract for a single, full-time equivalent licensed speech language therapist.

Currently in Texas, licensed assistants are not permitted to participate in the individualized education plan process without the presence of a supervisor, and must be supervised by a licensed practitioner at least two hours a week. Texas has one of the highest standards for licensed speech therapy assistants and often are the professionals who are providing much of the speech therapy services to students. A person with at least a bachelor's degree in speech pathology should be considered, at the discretion of a school district, a licensed evaluator and licensed service provider of speech therapy in the public schools and should not be restricted from providing services.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2822 amends the Education Code to require that the multidisciplinary team, that collects or reviews data for determining the eligibility of a student to participate in a school district's special education program based on the student's speech impairment, include a person who holds a certificate in speech and hearing therapy, a person who holds a certificate in speech-language therapy, a person who holds a certificate in speech-language pathology, or a person who holds a limited license to practice in the public schools as a fully licensed speech-language pathologist. The bill provides that a person, if authorized by the board of trustees, who holds a limited license may provide the necessary speech and language services as determined by the team.

C.S.H.B. 2822 amends the Occupations Code to require that at least three members of the nine member State Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology be employed by a school district. The bill requires the State Board of Examiners for Speech Pathology and Audiology to issue a limited license to practice in the public schools as a fully-licensed speech-language pathologist to those who are employed by a school district or capable of being employed as a speech-language therapist or a licensed assistant in speech-language pathology and successfully complete within 3 years from the date the license is granted, the examination required under Section 401.305.

The bill deletes certain current provisions relating to the issuance of a limited license to practice in the public schools as a fully-licensed speech-language pathologist.

The bill repeals Sections 401.314 (b),(c),(d), and (f), Occupations Code relating to limited license to practice in public schools.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2003.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 2822 modifies the original by deleting certain current provisions relating to the issuance of a limited license to practice in the public schools as a fully-licensed speech-language pathologist. C.S.H.B. 2822 modifies the original by adding provisions relating to who may be issued a limited license to practice in the public schools as a fully-licensed speech-language pathologist. C.S.H.B. 2822 modifies the original by repealing Sections 401.314 (b),(c),(d), and (f), Occupations Code relating to limited license to practice in public schools.